

REMARKS

Claims 8 – 16, 18 and 24 are pending. Claims 8 – 16 and 24 are allowed. Claim 18 is rejected.

The applicants' attorney amends claim 18. The applicants' attorney respectfully asserts that claim 18, as amended, is in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed below. If, after considering the amendment and reasons, the examiner believes claim 18 should not be allowed, the applicants' attorney respectfully requests that the examiner call to schedule a telephone conference to further the prosecution of the claims, before issuing an Office Action.

Rejection of Claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The applicants' attorney respectfully asserts that claim 18, as amended, is patentable over U.S. Patents 3,304,899 issued to Weatherly (Weatherly) and 5,134,950 issued to Berte (Berte). Neither Weatherly nor Berte discloses a hull having a plurality of hull portions that, when the hull travels at a cruising velocity, have a Froude number greater than approximately 0.8 and suspend a main body of the hull above the water line.

The applicants' claim 18, as amended, recites a method of forming a hull that includes forming a main body, and coupling a plurality of independent buoyant hull portions to the main body, wherein, when the hull travels at a cruising velocity, the combined buoyancy of the hull portions suspends the main body of the hull above the waterline, and each hull portion has a Froude number greater than approximately 0.8.

For example, as shown in FIG. 3 and discussed in paragraphs 20 – 21 of the specification, a ship 300 includes a main hull structure 310 and four hull portions 301A – 301C. When the ship 300 travels at its cruising velocity, the four hull portions 301A – 301D buoy the ship such that the main hull structure 310 is above the waterline 350.

In contrast, Weatherly fails to disclose a hull having a plurality of hull portions that, when the hull travels at a cruising velocity, have a Froude number greater than approximately 0.8 and suspend a main body of the hull above the waterline. Weatherly discloses a sailboat having a hull 10, a pontoon 46, a keel (shown in FIGS. 1 – 5 but not labeled with a reference number), and a rudder 54. The hull 10 is analogous to the applicants' main body 310 of the applicants' hull; and the keel, rudder and pontoon are analogous to the applicants' plurality of hull portions 301A – 301C because each is shorter in length than the hull 10. When the sailboat travels at a cruising speed across the water, the keel, rudder 54, pontoon 46, and hull 10 extend into the water. By extending into the water, the hull 10 buoy's the sail boat as the sail boat cruises. Therefore, unlike the applicants' claimed hull, Weatherly's keel, rudder 54, and pontoon 46 do not suspend the hull 10 above the waterline as the sailboat travels at a cruising velocity.

Also in contrast, Berte fails to disclose a hull having a plurality of hull portions that, when the hull travels at a cruising velocity, have a Froude number greater than approximately 0.8 and suspend a main body of the hull above the waterline. Berte discloses a sailboat having a three hulls, a starboard hull 6A (FIG. 1), a port hull 6B (FIG. 1), and stern hull 6C (FIG. 1), that buoy the sailboat. The hulls 6A – 6C are analogous to the applicants' hull portions because, when the sailboat travels at a cruising velocity, the hulls 6A – 6C extend into the water to buoy the sailboat. Each hull 6A – 6C is attached to a triangular deck frame that supports webbing for an operator to stand on. The hulls 6A – 6C are not attached to a main body of a hull. Furthermore, the sailboat does not include a hull main body that is analogous to the applicants' main body 310. Therefore, unlike the applicants' claimed hull, Berte's hulls 6A – 6C do not suspend a main body of a hull above the waterline as the sailboat travels at a cruising speed.

Conclusion

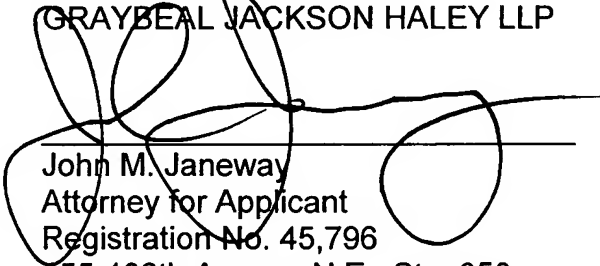
The applicant's attorney respectfully requests the examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 18 in view of the amendment and remarks and issue an allowance for claims 8 – 16, 18 and 24.

Should any additional fees be required, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 07-1897.

If, after considering this response, the examiner believes the claims should not be allowed, the applicants' attorney respectfully requests that the examiner call to schedule a telephone conference to further the prosecution of the claims, before issuing an Office Action.

DATED this 13th day of December 2005.

Respectfully submitted,
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